

January 30, 1961

Dr. Nicolai D. Ierusalimski
Academy of Sciences, U.S.S.R.
B. Jaluzhskaya ul., 33
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Dear Doctor Ierusalimski:

As biologists from all parts of the world have frequently stated, it is of the utmost importance to explore every possibility of international cooperation in science. One of the most relevant areas for doing this is in the biological exploration of planets. We feel that we have not had an adequate opportunity to discuss the basic problems in this area and would like to encourage every constructive measure that would make this possible. As you know, our countries have adhered to COSPAR as an important channel of communication in space research. Dr. Porter, who is the delegate to COSPAR from the U. S. National Academy of Sciences has asked me to assist him in formulating proposals for ways and means of improving communication. There will be another meeting of COSPAR, I believe in Florence, Italy, in mid-April and it would be advantageous to have some concrete proposals ready for the disposition of the COSPAR executive at that time. There is still some uncertainty as to whether I will be able to attend that meeting myself; I would definitely make a greater effort to do so if there were a prospect of a discussion with you or your colleagues on issues of planetary biological investigation or on plans for more definite discussions later on. If you could let me know your own views on this matter, it would therefore be very helpful in making my own plans whether to undertake that trip in April.

One suggestion that has been discussed in the Committee of the Space Science Board of the National Academy of Sciences of which I am a member, is to minimize the number of new meetings of scientists interested in space research. Instead, COSPAR might sponsor smaller discussions in fields of special interests in connection with other scientific conferences. Among other values, this procedure would have the advantage of securing additional interest and attendance on the part of scientists who would not now be willing to make a special trip to an international meeting devoted solely to space science problems. For example, the forthcoming meetings of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) in Japan in September 1961 and the International Congress of Biochemistry in Moscow in August 1961 might be appropriate occasions for COSPAR-sponsored meetings or

Dr. Ierusalimski, cont. 2

January 30, 1961

discussions on space science topics. In particular, I would like to ask your views, and of course those of your colleagues, on the feasibility of a session on space biology in connection with the Biochemistry Congress to be held in August. At this late date, it might be impossible to impose upon the time set aside for the regular activities of the Congress that have already been planned; however, it might be possible to arrange for the meeting to be held on the day before or the day after the regular Congress sessions. If your reaction to this proposal were a favorable one, I would certainly support a proposal that COSPAR take the initiative in co-sponsoring a meeting at that occasion. Such an arrangement would be especially advantageous for biologists: at the regular meetings of COSPAR, for example, the one held at Nice last January, there was very little that would attract the professional interests of most biologists or biochemists. Constructive activity along these lines necessarily requires the support of scientists from both our countries and I hope that the circumstances are appropriate for a favorable reaction from you. Needless to say, I would be very happy to hear of any other proposals that would be a step in the same direction.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

cc: Dr. Porter

87 enc.

*Enc
87*